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OBITUARIES

W. H. FRASER

By reason of the recent death of Professor W. H. Fraser of the University of Toronto, Spanish studies have lost a staunch friend. Professor Fraser was born at Bond Head, Simcoe Co., Ont., in 1853. He prepared for the university at Bradford High School, and then, after several years of teaching in country schools, entered the University of Toronto. He was graduated in 1880 and soon after became master of French and German at Upper Canada College, Toronto. After a year of study passed abroad in 1886, Professor Fraser was appointed head of the department of Italian and Spanish in the University of Toronto. He had nearly completed 30 years of faithful and brilliant service in his alma mater when death called him, December 28, 1916.

Professor Fraser is best known in the United States as one of the authors of several very successful French and German grammars. It will therefore surprise many to learn that he had taught neither of these languages for over 30 years previous to his death. While his name was familiar to all Romance scholars, few in this country knew him intimately. He seldom attended the meetings of the Modern Language Association, and never contributed to technical journals. His interests were broad rather than specialized.

Teachers of Spanish should never forget that Professor Fraser was the first departmental head on this continent to organize a four year course in Spanish. This is the more remarkable because to this day no other Canadian university includes Spanish in its curriculum; the same is true, I believe, of all Canadian high schools. As an administrator his career was one long struggle, characterized by many disappointments, but rewarded with many conspicuous successes. His first task was to engage in newspaper propaganda to gain for his university adequate financial support from unwilling legislatures. Next he embarked in a campaign to secure for the modern languages their rightful place of equality with the traditional classic subjects. To the end of his life he was forced to contend to ensure a dignified status for the two "minor" languages which he professed. Education in Canada is bureaucratic, state-controlled. Admirable as this system is in many respects, it makes very difficult the task of the educational reformer. Entrenched conservatism is buttressed with acts of parliament. Only a popular demand can readily effect a change. Happily there are many signs of such a demand in Canada at present. Canada is experiencing a reflex of the vast interest in things Spanish now felt south of the line. Newspapers and politicians are beginning to clamor for more instruction in Spanish. Teachers' meetings frequently discuss the question. Everything now indicates that Spanish has a bright future in

Canada. It will soon be taught in many secondary schools and then universities can no longer ignore it. The growing importance of Spanish in the mother country, too, works to the same end. (Leeds and the University of London have recently founded chairs of Spanish.) And when this result is brought to pass, no small part of it will be due to the life work of Professor Fraser. Professor Fraser has many claims to gratitude on the part of modern language teachers. Teachers of Spanish will remember him as the pioneer of the Spanish movement in Canada.

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ALBERT FREDERICK KUERSTEINER

Albert Frederick Kuersteiner, Professor of Romance Languages in Indiana University, died on June 9, 1917, after a long illness. Professor Kuersteiner was born in New Orleans, November 9, 1865, received his A. B. degree from the University of Cincinnati in 1888 and his Ph. D. from Johns Hopkins in 1904. As a teacher he served in Wabash College, the Hughes High School of Cincinnati, and Indiana University, and was best known in the field of French and Spanish. The salient characteristics of his teaching were thoroughness, accuracy and enthusiasm.

While his published work touches the broader field of pedagogy (*School Review*, 1911), and his death left completed a French grammar in manuscript, his chief contributions were in the domain of Spanish. Several articles on French and Spanish phonetics (*Maître Phonétique*, X and XI), and reviews of Traub's "*Spanish Verb*" and Colton's "*Phonétique Castillane*" (*Mod. Lang. Notes*, XVIII and XXVII) were but accessories to his real life work, which was a study of the "*Rimado de Palacio*" of Pero López de Ayala. The doctoral dissertation on the use of the "*Relative Pronoun in the Rimado de Palacio*" (*Revue Hispanique*, 1911) is a study of permanent value. The edition of Ayala's first "*Cantica sobre el Fecho de la Yglesia*" (*Studies in Honor of A. Marshall Elliott*, 1911) foreshadows the method to be employed in the edition of the "*Rimado de Palacio*." The edition, now in press, will appear as one of the volumes of the *Bibliotheca Hispanica*, and will inevitably prove the definitive version of this important old Spanish poem.

The death of Professor Kuersteiner is a severe loss not only to those who knew and loved him but also to the cause of scholarship and education. His critical work shows surety of method and accuracy of detail, while his labors in the field of teaching have left a lasting imprint, especially on the colleges and secondary schools of Indiana.

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